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OBTI-STATE RELATIONSHIPS ON NIS

Summary

The Department of State, an NIS producer from 1950-1961, is now involved with the Program primarily as a reviewer of portions of the NIS General Survey. Reviews by the Embassies are particularly valuable to producing analysts in the DDI and in Commerce, providing new and previously unreported information or accurate interpretations of data available in Washington. Those done by INR or country desks in the Department are also useful, particularly in safeguarding official foreign policy positions. The Department's requirements for NIS are channeled through the State member of the NIS Committee.

General Survey Review Relationships

The manuscripts that State reviews for the NIS Program, either in the field or in the Department, deal with sociological, political, economic, or scientific topics. Dissemination to the field must be approved by the Country Director, who determines whether or not a draft is sent out, based on the Mission's workload and the availability of information and expertise in Washington. Over the past 4 1/2 years, about seven out of eight drafts received by State have been sent to the field, 40% for "broad brush" review and comment and 60% for optional review. Of the latter category some 70% have been the subject of field comments, and of 107 manuscripts received by State in FY 1972, 95 have gone to the field, with comments coming back on 75.

Factbook Relationships

The Office of the Geographer in State furnishes data on land areas, length of land boundaries and limits of territorial waters to the NIS Division, OBTI for incorporation into the Basic Intelligence Factbook. Missions in the field frequently make comments and suggestions concerning the published Factbook. Such feedback (some 25 separate communications every 6 months) serves as an effective review of Factbook content.

Problems

Problems in the State-NIS relationships have stemmed from budgetary stringencies e.g., BALPA, OPRED - or from the uneven, often low priority treatment that NIS manuscripts receive, particularly in the Department. Desk and INR analysts are generally cooperative and are interested in contributing toward accurate basic intelligence publications, but variables of workload and expertise make for an uneven quality of review. Extensive delays in forwarding field comments also slow or hamper NIS processing.